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Montana Pupil Transportation News and Updates August 2002



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A Monthly Newsletter Published by Pupil Transportation, School Budgeting and Accounting Division

NATIONAL NEWS

SuperShuttle International, Inc to Improve Service For Travelers Who Use Wheelchairs Under Agreement With Justice Department.

Washington, D.C. The Department of Justice and SuperShuttle International, Inc. have signed a settlement agreement designed to ensure that the nation's largest door-to-door airport shuttle company provides the same level of service to wheel chair users as it provides to the general public. This is the first agreement reached with a national company that provides transportation on demand, as opposed to transportation along a fixed route on a fixed schedule.

Under the two-year agreement, SuperShuttle will acquire additional accessible vehicles at its 11 corporately owned facilities, collect comparative data on the timeliness and quality of service, and maintain standing subcontracts with accessible transportation providers to meet overflow demand.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the Agreement through the website, or anyone interested in finding out more about the ADA, can visit the ADA web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada>. People can also call the ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

LOCAL NEWS

Montana Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Conference was held in Belgrade June 19-21, 2002.

One of the many positive aspects of the MAPT Conference is that we get an opportunity to acknowledge the great work done by Montana's school bus drivers. The Montana Highway Patrol presents awards each year to a school bus driver and a transportation aide who go beyond the call of duty to transport and care for our precious cargo.

Montana Highway School Bus Driver of the Year

The Montana Highway Patrol has chosen Marilyn Leazenby of Fort Benton School District as **2002 School Bus Driver of the Year**. Marilyn has been working as a "twice per day" route driver for 25 years. Marilyn's driving record is spotless

mostly due to her attention to safety. Marilyn is the model of driver responsibility.

Marilyn logs 158 miles per each school day. One-half of the daily mileage is on gravel. Marilyn also serves as an activity driver, safety trainer, and secretary of Montana School Bus Drivers Association plus she is an active member of the Safety Workshop Steering Committee for the MAPT Conference. Marilyn's dedication to improving bus driving skills shines through as she has been in charge of the MAPT Road-E-O for eight years. Marilyn is very active in her community, serves on intra-school committees, serves as a 4-H leader, and currently delivers meals-on-wheels to shut-ins.

Congratulations to Marilyn Leazenby.

Montana Highway Patrol Transportation Aide of the Year

The Montana Highway Patrol has chosen Connie Blom as Transportation Aide of the Year. Connie is a Special Services School Bus Aide and Classroom Aide for Yellowstone West Carbon County Special Services Cooperative in Laurel. Connie is a reliable and dedicated individual who has a great fondness and respect for kids. Of course they feel the same way about her. Connie is knowledgeable, loving and caring, firm but gentle and comforting to distressed or depressed kids. Through her encouragement she seems to lead a child, who is either moody or has had a "bad day" to change their mood or attitude to be more positive, which allows the child to function at a higher level.

Connie is extremely helpful to the drivers and sub-drivers because she knows the route, the road and most important of all, the kids. Drivers respect and praise her, parents feel secure and comfortable when placing their child in her care and the staff at Yellowstone West feels very fortunate to have Connie as part of their team.

Congratulations to Connie Blom.

OTHER NEWS

I have been working very hard to get a CDL with passenger and air brake endorsements. I took a CDL class from Terry Brown (past state director/bus driver/driver trainer) in

Townsend with 10 other CDL driver “wanna be’s.” Terry’s class was all about passing the written exam. We worked on it for 1 night per week, 2 hours per night for 5 or 6 weeks. Once I took the written test and passed, I started driving with Mike Sevrey at Treasure State Transit here in Helena. Mike had a great program and I learned a lot from him. I went through the driver training class at Karst Stage, learned more about the pre-trip inspection and took Luke for a drive in one of the Karst buses. When I got back to Treasure State to prepare to take the pre-trip inspection and driving test, I started driving with John Goodhart. He is a patient and very kind man. I took the driving test the first time and ran right over a curb on the very last hard right. Of course that is the end of the test and I failed. John and I practiced and practiced, I took the test again – got a little rattled with on-coming traffic and hit the curb again on a hard right although I did pass the pre-trip that time. I was getting a little frustrated and my respect for all bus drivers was growing by leaps and bounds. John and I went out driving again, practiced those hard rights and practiced them again. We backed it up; we parallel parked and practiced the hard rights some more. I took the driving test again on August 13 and I **PASSED**. When I returned to Treasure State Transit alone and driving my bus, John and the gang were cheering. I really would like to thank Hartley, John and everyone at Treasure State Transit for hanging in there with me (and for the coffee and donuts on try #2). I want to thank Luke Avery and Vance Ruff at Karst Stage in Bozeman and Terry Brown for teaching the adult education class that helped me to pass the written part of the CDL. I also want to thank State Superintendent Linda McCulloch for letting me drive during the “Yellow School Bus Tour,” and David Huff for all of his tips and hints (not back seat driving!) while it was my turn at the wheel. I would also like to thank Bill Cooper and the bus tour gang for not taking a cab. I am proud to tell you that I am a fully licensed and certified **YELLOW SCHOOL BUS DRIVER**.

Since You Asked (Worth repeating)

What do I need to do when a driver certificate expires?

OPI will post periodic Driver Certificate reports on the transportation web site at www.opi.state.mt.us. Pick <Pupil Transportation> from the Programs and Services drop down menu. Districts will be able to identify needed updates before the certificate expires. Please notify the driver of the expiration date so he/she has time to update the requirement. Prior to the date of expiration, the driver will renew that portion of the certificate that is about to expire. The driver will notify the clerk or transportation personnel when he/she has renewed. The district personnel will complete the TR-35 (School Bus Driver Certificate), sign it and give it to the clerk. Copies will be sent to OPI and the County Superintendent, a copy will be kept at the district and the original will be given to the driver. Encourage the driver to make certain that the dates are correct.

How does an expired driver certificate affect my district’s transportation reimbursement?

10.7.112 (6) of the Administrative Rule states: “The qualifications of all bus drivers are reviewed at the time the state verification of transportation claims is made, as the qualifications for the bus driver are one of the criteria for eligibility for reimbursement. With the exception of (2) and (3) of this rule, OPI will not reimburse for routes driven by drivers without a current certificate on file with the office of public instruction at the time the TR-6 claim is due. If any license, certificate or examination was expired for any period of time, the OPI will withhold transportation reimbursement funding for the number of days the driver was not qualified.

If a driver has an expired First Aid card, medical or CDL on the due date of the TR-6, transportation reimbursement for the period of time the driver is out of compliance will be withheld. If the driver is current with all requirements on the due date for the TR-6 no other edits are made.”

My district purchased a new school bus. It came equipped with lap/shoulder belts. What is the district’s responsibility?

MCA 61-13-103 Seatbelt use required - exceptions.

(1) No driver may operate a motor vehicle upon a highway of the state of Montana unless each occupant of a designated seating position is wearing a properly adjusted and fastened seatbelt.

(2) The provisions of this section do not apply to:

- (a) an occupant of a motor vehicle who possesses a written statement from a licensed physician that he is unable to wear a seatbelt for medical reasons;
- (b) an occupant of a motor vehicle in which all seatbelts are being used by other occupants;
- (c) an operator of a motorcycle as defined in MCA 61-1-105 or a motor-driven cycle as defined in MCA 61-1-106;
- (d) an occupant of a vehicle licensed as special mobile equipment as defined in MCA 61-1-104;
- (e) children subject to the provisions of MCA 61-9-420; or
- (f) an occupant who makes frequent stops with a motor vehicle in his official job duties and who may be exempted by the department.

MCA 61-9-420 Child safety restraint systems - standards - exemptions (in part).

(1) If a child under 2 years of age is a passenger in a motor vehicle, that motor vehicle must be equipped with one child safety restraint for each child in the vehicle and each child must be properly restrained.

(2) A child between 2 and 4 years of age or weighing less than 40 pounds who is a passenger in a motor vehicle must be properly restrained or restrained in a safety belt that meets applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.

There is no exemption for school bus occupants, so if belts are present, all riders should use them. Manufacturers are required in some states to provide belts and from a liability perspective those same manufacturers would probably prefer to put the belt systems in all buses. If the school administration or driver does not enforce the usage then a crash certainly could bring liability to the district. We do not recommend removing the belts.

Where can I find the Transportation Spreadsheet for budgeting purposes?

Go to the new OPI Web Site at www.opi.state.mt.us. Choose <Pupil Transportation> from the programs and services drop

down listing. You will find a link called <Transportation Excel Spreadsheet for Budgeting>. Please call me at 444-3096 if you have any questions.

Where can I find the new forms??

We have placed all of the new forms on our new transportation web site. On your browser, go to www.opi@state.mt.us then click on <programs and services>, then click on <Pupil Transportation>. You will find all of the forms there. Of course, you can always call Maxine at 444-3096 for hard copies of the forms.

PROMPTLY RETURN TRAINING VIDEOS

Training Video News...

New training videos are now available from OPI. This is the way it works: Contact me, tell me the training date, a mailing address and who is responsible for the video training. I will prepare a packet for you including a return address label, a form that the responsible person will sign and return, and training information about the video, if appropriate. Once training has been completed, repackage the video, put all of the training information back into the box, and use the return label to mail it promptly to me at OPI. If you have any suggestions regarding training videos, please email me at mmougeot@state.mt.us or you can reach me by calling (406) 444-3096.

Newly purchased driver training videos include:

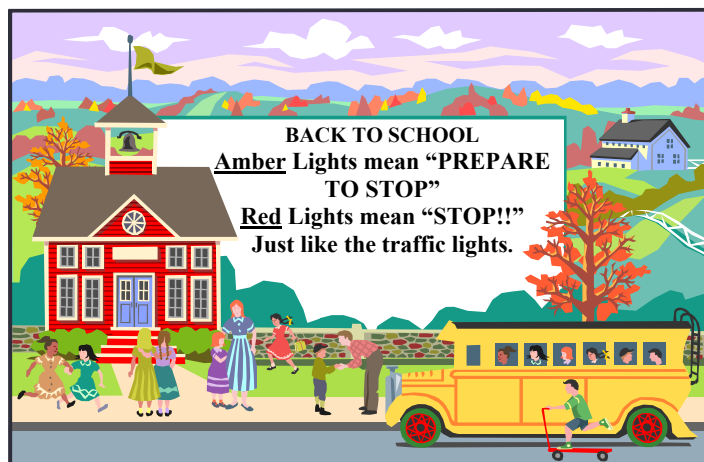
- 2 copies of *Evacuating a School Bus*
- 2 copies of *Bus Evacuation for Special Ed Bus Drivers*
- 2 copies of *Intervention Strategies for School Bus Drivers*
- 2 copies of *Intervention Strategies for Special Ed Bus Drivers*
- 2 copies of *Safe School Bus Crossing Procedures*
- 2 copies of *Introduction to Special Ed Bus Driving*
- 1 set (7 tapes) titled *Professional School Bus Driver*
 - 1. *Establishing a Positive Environment on Your Bus*
 - 2. *Dealing with Severe Disruptions*
 - 3. *Engaging the Support of the School Admin.*
 - 5. *The Role of the Bus Driver in Public Relations*
 - 6. *Handling Students with Special Needs*
- 1 set (4 tapes) titled *Bus Discipline: A Positive Approach*
 - 1. *The Role of the Administrator*
 - 2. *The Role of the Driver*
 - 3. *The Role of the Teachers*
 - 4. *Solving Persistent Problems*
- 1 set (2 tapes) titled *Minnesota School Bus Drivers Development Series*
 - 1. *Winter and Adverse Conditions*
 - 2. *Student Management*
- 1 set (3 tapes) titled *Behind the Wheel, Precision Right and Left Turns for:*
 - 1. *Small Bus*
 - 2. *Conventional Bus*

3. *Transit Bus*

OPI video library also includes:

Necessary and Reasonable Force
Confidential Records
Children in Traffic
The Veteran Driver
The Safest Way Out

These videos count toward the 10-hour annual training required by the new standards. When drivers watch these videos and there is discussion time afterwards, the entire amount of time spent will count towards the new training requirement.



OPI Bus Mileage Reimbursement -- Miles Actually "Traveled"

In response to recent questions asked of us from a county superintendent, when planning bus routes for FY03, please remember—**Buses must travel on routes as approved by the county transportation committee. Unofficially shortening routes to accommodate absences and differing daily ridership may result in overpayment of state and county funding, requiring refunds.**

MCA 20-10-141, section (1) states, in part, "All bus miles traveled on bus routes approved by the county transportation committee are reimbursable." Buses that deviate from approved routes might run fewer miles than were approved. Unless actually traveled, bus mileage is not reimbursable and must not be claimed on the district's semi-annual transportation claims (TR-5 and TR-6).

Some districts feel the need to shorten routes when students are absent due to illness or during sports seasons when practices are held after school. Officially establishing shortened routes will allow your district the flexibility it needs. If you feel there is a significant need in your district to shorten routes for those types of circumstances, **establish routes for FY03 that accommodate a shorter and longer version of the original route.**

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

1. Assume most kids on the route live within 16 miles of the school. The bus route is 20 miles each way. All students ride the bus in the morning. Going home, all but one student de-board the bus by the 16 mile stop. Cindy is the only student beyond 16 miles. Her stop is the end of the route at 20 miles from the school. Cindy plays basketball and volleyball, so she participates in practices after school on many days of the school year and does not ride the bus home. Instead of Route 1 (40 miles round trip), the district should establish Route 1A (20 + 16 = 36 miles round trip) and Route 1B (40 miles round trip)

2. Submit separate TR-1 Bus Route Forms for each route (1A, 1B) for County Transportation Committee approval.

3. Drivers log the number of days each route is run. On days Cindy is at practice, the bus driver runs Route 1A. On days when Cindy rides home, the driver logs Route 1B.

4. The clerk reports days traveled on each route on the semi-annual transportation claims (TR-6).

5. OPI calculates the miles traveled and reimburse the district for each semester.

NOTE: If the district develops a need to shorten a route mid-year, the same process should be used.

OPI recognizes the difficulties school districts encounter in trying to efficiently run routes and accommodate daily routing needs. However, state law restricts OPI's payment for miles actually traveled. We will continue to consider options, such as legislative change, that might offer increased flexibility for schools while retaining fiscal accountability for the state payments. By strictly adhering to bus routes as approved, the district will also avoid potential liability issues related to safety pitfalls when buses operate other than in areas and at times approved by the County Transportation Committee. Need more information? Contact Maxine Mougeot at (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

DRIVER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Friday October 18, 2002

Attention: Transportation Directors and Bus Drivers

The Fromberg School is hosting a Bus Drivers Workshop on Friday, October 18, 2002. Cost is \$75.00 per School, which means each school can bring all of their drivers plus the transportation director and/or supervisor for only \$75.00.

!!THIS TRAINING WILL COUNT TOWARDS THE MANDATORY 10 HOURS OF ANNUAL TRAINING FOR EACH DRIVER THAT ATTENDS!!

Lunch will be provided courtesy of Harlow's Bus Sales, Inc.

Classes will include:

Mirror Adjustment

School Bus Education for Kids

Simple Driving Techniques

Discussion on the new school bus standards

There will be a driving course, Buster or Barney, a game show, lots of fun and other activities.

For more information and to register, call Renee Shanks at 406-668-7557 or 406-668-7649.

READY OR NOT – HERE THEY COME!!



IMPORTANT DATES

August 25, 2002 Prior year adjustments will be included with the August State Aide Payment

August Bus Inspections completed and approved before 1st semester begins to insure full route reimbursement

October 1, 2002 Elementary TR-1 Forms due to County Superintendent

October 1, 2002 Safety Posters to State Superintendent

October 15, 2002 Elementary TR-1's due to OPI

October 20 – 26, 2002 National School Bus Safety Week

November 14 – 20, 2002 High School Bus Rider Count

Update driver certificates, bus inspection forms, route information and contracts regularly.

Just a Tidbit

If you want a passenger endorsement and/or an air brake endorsement and you already have a CDL, it is a federal requirement that you take the written part of the test that pertains to the endorsements that you want. You will also have to take the driving test again for the vehicle that you want to drive.



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Poster Contest
NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK
October 20-26, 2002

Who May Enter

Entries may be submitted by any student enrolled in a public, parochial or private elementary school. Four winning posters will be chosen from each division. Division #1 - Grades K-2, Division #2 - Grades 3-5, Division #3 -Grade 6-8, Division #4 - Special Education, Division #5 CAD (Computer Aided Drawing), Division #6 - International. Division #5 and #6 are eligible for competition within their division at the National level but not eligible as the Overall National Winner or as state winners.

Deadline Date

Completed poster designs must be submitted to the State Director by **October 1, 2002**. All entries become the property of the National School Bus Safety Week Committee or the State Director, and are not returned.

When Can Posters Be Drawn?

Posters can be drawn anytime between January 1, 2002 and the deadline of **October 1, 2002**.

Poster Specifications

Completed poster size must be 12" X 18" ONLY, with a one-inch (1") space left at the bottom of the poster for the entry blank. **This space must be available due to printing requirements. If not provided, poster will be disqualified.** Posters may be illustrated on the vertical or horizontal axis. National School Bus Safety Week (NSBSW) entry blank, or a reasonable facsimile with information typed or printed clearly should be **securely glued** to the **front-side in the lower left-hand corner** of the poster and on the **back-side in the center**. Age and grade level should be listed on the entry blank. Please print clearly.

Designs should be submitted on quality tag, poster illustration board or heavy paper. Construction paper may be used but winning entries must be mounted on quality tag poster. Lamination is not permitted, and **WILL** disqualify the poster. Cut paper/stencils (freehand or pre-drawn stick-on stencils) are not permitted and will disqualify the poster.

There is no limitation on the use and number of colors.

There is no limitation on the type of media - such as print crayon, felt pen, etc. - used on the poster design; however, wood, plastic, glass or metal should not be part of the poster. Collage materials should not be used. Glued on pieces will eliminate the poster.

Poster designs may not incorporate any copyrighted characters (i.e., comic and/or television characters), photographs, magazine or newspaper illustrations.

Poster Themes Must be Original and Correct in Safety Concept

Poster themes must be original, correct in safety concept and the exclusive work of the student entering the contest in idea, design and execution.

Instructors should supervise all work created. Completion of art should be done in school during the months of January to September, coordinating with the state's poster contest. Poster and slogan must harmonize with the theme:

Stay Back, Stay Back from the Yellow and Black

(Contestants must illustrate above theme only, and the theme must be exactly as shown above.)

Illustrations should be positive in approach, demonstrating only proper school bus safety behaviors. **At least a part of a yellow school bus must be present in the poster.**

Lettering

Freehand drawn letters only may be used on the poster design. **Stenciled, pre-printed, manufactured stick-on or press-on letters or tracings may not be used and will disqualify the poster.** Lettering should be clearly legible, even if used as part of the poster design.

State Entries

Entries in the state poster contests are to be mailed to the address below for judging.

**Maxine Mougeot, State Pupil Transportation Director
Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501**

Prizes for the State Contest

The Montana Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) will award cash prizes to the winners in each category. Amounts will be determined later in the year depending on the entries received in each category. The total available is \$150.00.

Judging

Criteria for the selection of award-winning posters are:

- a. Relationship of the poster design to the school bus safety practices;
- b. Originality of the poster and how the idea is expressed in the poster design;
- c. Artwork and its execution; and
- d. Visual impact of the poster design.

All rules regarding poster specifications, themes, lettering, etc. must be followed. The penalty for non-compliance will be disqualification of the poster. All state entries become the property of the NSBSW Committee. The right to modify any poster for reproduction is reserved by the NSBSW Committee.

Prizes for the National Contest

Prizes will be awarded for each division as follows:

1st Place and Overall Winner	1000 Savings Bond
1st Place Winners of remaining 3 divisions	500 Savings Bond
2nd Place Winners of each 4 divisions	250 Savings Bond
3rd Place Winners of each 4 divisions	100 Savings Bond
1st Place Winner - CAD division	100 Savings Bond
1st Place Winner - International division	100 Savings Bond

The National School Bus Safety Week Committee is comprised of members of the National Association for Pupil Transportation the National School Transportation Association, the National Safety Council's School Transportation Section, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, and school bus manufacturers and suppliers.

2002 NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK POSTER PROGRAM ENTRY BLANK	2002 NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK POSTER PROGRAM ENTRY BLANK
Student Name _____ Grade ____ Age ____	Student Name _____ Grade ____ Age ____
School _____	School _____
School Address _____	School Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Teachers Name _____	Teachers Name _____

Please fill out two entry forms for each poster and attach one to the front of the poster and one to the back of poster.

Thank you for your cooperation.